Build tailwater ponds or holding ponds

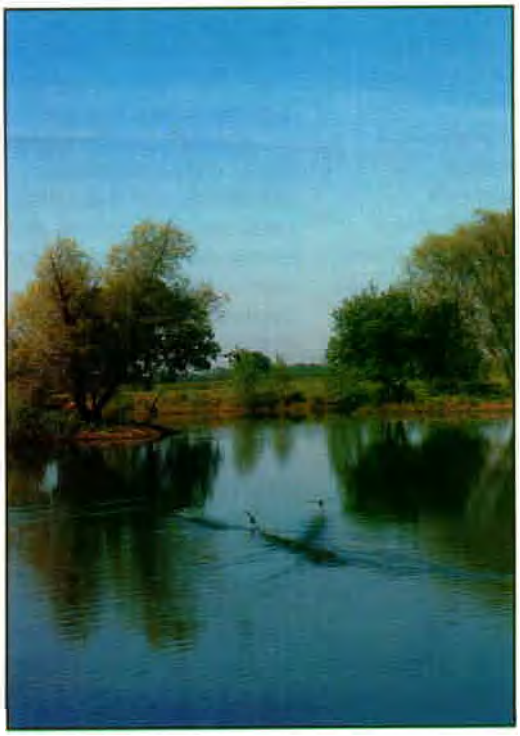
What to do:

Build a simple earthen pond—or a double system tailwater pond that fills with irrigation water used for crops or from winter runoff. The first pond collects silt that is periodically excavated. The second pond serves as a water return basin. Be sure to design the second pond with moderately-sloped sides. The moderate slope helps promote vegetation growth and offers easy access to water and green feed for pheasants, upland birds, ducks, and mammals. Create shallow benches along the sides to support marsh vegetation. The middle of the pond should be several feet deep to help prevent cattail invasion and provide water as shallow areas evaporate.

Wetland vegetation may become established naturally. Upland areas can be planted with perennial grasses to keep out noxious weeds; desirable sedges and small rushes can also be transplanted to help keep out cattails. Trees and shrubs can provide additional wildlife habitat, but these areas also attract predators so they should not be planted if you are trying to attract duck broods. Be sure the pond can be easily drained or pumped in case of a waterfowl disease outbreak.

If you plan to stock fish you must obtain your fish from a registered aquaculturist. Also, avoid stocking largemouth bass if you want the ponds to support duck broods! Please note: *Tulare Basin evaporation ponds must be steep-sided and are not intended to, and should not, attract wildlife.*

LANGE TWINS



Earthen ponds and double system tailwater ponds used for irrigation water quickly become a magnet for wildlife.

Regulatory agencies to contact:

Irrigation District. Note: The Sacramento District office of the Army Corps of Engineers has affirmed that vegetation which may become established within a holding or tailwater pond is *not* subject to regulation as a wetland under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. This is based on the fact that ponds are constructed and operated as a function of "normal farming activities" and would be dry without artificial flooding. If you would like to receive a written determination regarding a pond you'd like to construct, contact the Corps. If you receive water from the Bureau of Reclamation, they support the development of tailwater ponds.

Benefits:

- Provides pair water for pre-nesting ducks and brood areas for ducklings.
- Offers water, cover, and food for other wildlife species, including deer, small mammals, dove, quail, pheasants, reptiles, and amphibians.
- Provides habitat for aquatic species, including fish.
- Traps silt in runoff from fields.
- Reduces wave erosion on pond banks when sides are moderately-sloped and vegetated.
- Can aid in ground water recharge with some soils.
- Offers stored water sources for fire fighting.

MAKING THE MOST OF WATER

Wildlife species need water—in the right amounts and at the right times of year. Young pheasants and ducklings that hatch in your fields during spring and summer must have fresh water nearby to survive. Moist environments support insects that are essential in the diet of young pheasants and ducklings; they also offer cool, shady areas during the hot days of summer. Migratory birds rely on farmland ponds, marshes, and flooded fields as they overwinter in the state. Resident wildlife species also need reliable year-round water sources for drinking. Be sure to check with your water provider to assure that a planned pond complies with your water contract.